

# February



## National Health Observances



Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## American Heart Month

**Sponsor:** The American Heart Association (<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>) 

Heart disease, including stroke, is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Every year, 1 in 4 deaths is caused by heart disease.

The good news? Heart disease can often be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their health conditions. Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to create opportunities for people to make healthier choices.

Make a difference in your community: Spread the word about strategies for preventing heart disease and encourage people to live heart healthy lives.

### How can American Heart Month make a difference?


We can use this month to raise awareness about heart disease and how people can help prevent it — both at home and in the community.

Here are just a few ideas:

- Encourage families to make small changes, like using spices to season their food instead of salt.
- Motivate teachers and administrators to make physical activity a part of the school day to help students start good habits early.
- Ask doctors and nurses to be leaders in their communities by speaking out about ways to prevent heart disease.

### How can I help spread the word?

We've made it easier for you to make a difference. This toolkit is full of ideas to help you take action today. For example:

- Add information about living a heart healthy lifestyle to your newsletter.
- Tweet about American Heart Month.
- Host a community event where families can be active while learning about local health resources.
- Take action: Be the cure (<http://yourethecure.org/aha/advocacy/default.aspx>) ! Join the American Heart Association's national movement in support of healthier communities and healthier lives.

## Get the Word Out

### Sample Media and/or Newsletter or Listserv Announcement

*Cut and paste this text into your newsletter, listserv, or press release. Add local details and quotes from your organization.*

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. To prevent heart disease and increase awareness of its effects, **[your organization]** is proudly participating in American Heart Month. Locally, **[fill in statistics]** are affected by heart disease.

- **[Add details about your local activities.]**
- **[Include quote from your organization.]**





You can make healthy changes to lower your risk of developing heart disease. Controlling and preventing risk factors is also important for people who already have heart disease. To lower your risk:

- Watch your weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Get active and eat healthy.

For more information, visit **[insert your organization information]**.

### Is your organization on Twitter? Send tweets.

The messages below are sample tweets. To send them via Twitter, click on the URL link provided after the “Tweet this message” phrase. Or, copy the message and paste it to your Twitter stream and click post.

- Did you know? Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States: <http://1.usa.gov/ijFWzj>
  - Tweet this message: <http://clicktotweet.com/Eb03A> 
- Q. Who’s at higher risk for heart disease? A. A woman age 55 or older or a man age 45 or older: <http://1.usa.gov/W35sk6>
  - Tweet this message: <http://clicktotweet.com/13sf1> 
- Cheat Sheet: Questions to ask your doctor if you have high blood pressure: <http://1.usa.gov/jXpKQD>
  - Tweet this message: <http://clicktotweet.com/m2p34> 
- Manage your cholesterol — easier said than done? Watch this presentation from @medlineplus4you for help: <http://1.usa.gov/ifq74n>
  - Tweet this message: <http://clicktotweet.com/Qjel2> 

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- Planning a grocery store trip this weekend? Eat heart healthy by choosing foods that are low in sodium (salt). <http://1.usa.gov/zIGWmf>
  - Tweet this message: <http://clicktotweet.com/b9IKt> 
- Did you know? You need to get your blood pressure checked every 2 years starting at age 18. Curious why? <http://1.usa.gov/mRFcKh>
  - Tweet this message: <http://clicktotweet.com/L6G5x> 
- Are you a woman over age 55? Talk to your doctor about taking aspirin to reduce your risk of stroke: <http://1.usa.gov/jnchQM>
  - Tweet this message: <http://clicktotweet.com/5kGiK> 

### Send e-cards

- healthfinder.gov: Get Screened  
(<http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=10>)
- healthfinder.gov: Watch Your Weight  
(<http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=17>)
- healthfinder.gov: Eat Healthy  
(<http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=6>)
- healthfinder.gov: Quit Smoking  
(<http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=13>)
- healthfinder.gov: Be Active  
(<http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=18>)
- CDC: Heart Health Fashion  
(<http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=260&category=173>)
- CDC: Know Your Blood Pressure Numbers  
(<http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=309&category=173>)
- CDC: Salt Intake  
(<http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=284&category=173>)

### Post a Web Badge

Add this free Web badge (<http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/nhoBadges.aspx#february>) to your Web site, blog, or social networking profile to show your support for Cervical Health Awareness Month

## Get Involved

Take action to increase awareness about teen dating violence.

1. Celebrate National Wear Red Day to raise awareness about women and heart disease. Encourage everyone in your community to wear red on February 1. Visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org) for more information.
2. Host an American Heart Month event at local schools, health centers, and libraries. Work with local recreation and fitness centers to spread the word about the importance of physical activity to prevent heart disease.
3. Contact your local Red Cross to host a CPR training event in your community. Urge local community members to learn CPR and AED (Automated External Defibrillator). These skills can help save the life of someone who has sudden cardiac arrest.
4. Host a 20-minute group walk around your office at lunch time.
5. Conduct a cooking demonstration using a heart-healthy recipe.

Adapted from the American Heart Association.

For more information and materials:

- Contact the American Heart Association (<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>) at [inquiries@heart.org](mailto:inquiries@heart.org) for more information and materials.

## Share These Tools

### Health Topics

- Keep Your Heart Healthy (<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/heart-health/keep-your-heart-healthy>)
- Heart Health: Conversation starters (<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/heart-health/heart-health-conversation-starters>)
- Heart Healthy Foods: Shopping list (<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/heart-health/heart-healthy-foods-shopping-list>)
- Reduce Your Risk of Stroke (<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/heart-health/reduce-your-risk-of-stroke>)
- Manage Stress (<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/heart-health/manage-stress>)

### Personal Health Tools

- Interactive Heart Attack Tutorial (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/heartattack/htm/index.htm>)
- My Blood Pressure Wallet Card [PDF - 664KB] (<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/hbpwallet.pdf>)
- Adult BMI Calculator ([http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult\\_bmi/english\\_bmi\\_calculator/bmi\\_calculator.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/english_bmi_calculator/bmi_calculator.html))
- Be Active Your Way Widget (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/HealthWidgets.aspx>)
- Daily Food and Activity Diary ([http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose\\_wt/diaryint.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/diaryint.htm))
- For Your Heart Survey (<http://www.womenshealth.gov/for-your-heart/?template=survey>)

### More Information (Health A-Z)

- Heart Diseases (<http://healthfinder.gov/FindServices/SearchContext.aspx?topic=391>)

### Find More Information

- Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/>) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Heart Disease: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (<http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/faqs.htm>) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Quit Smoking ([http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit\\_smoking/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/index.htm)) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Heart Disease 101 (<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=126>) Office of Minority Health
- Heart Health and Stroke (<http://www.womenshealth.gov/heart-health-stroke/>) Office on Women's Health
- Heart and Vascular Diseases (<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/index.htm>) National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- The Heart Truth Campaign (<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth/>) National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- Keep the Beat: Deliciously Health Eating (<http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/healthyeating/>) National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- Delicious Heart Healthy Latino Recipes (Spanish/English) [PDF – 3 MB] ([http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/sp\\_recip.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/sp_recip.pdf)) National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- Heart Attack: What is a Heart Attack? (<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/heartattack/whatisaheartattack/01.html>) National Institutes of Health

## Tips to Plan a National Health Observance

Each National Health Observance (NHO) presents an opportunity to educate the public, energize co-workers and community members, and promote healthy behaviors. The NHO toolkits (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/>) have the information and tools you need to get started.

Use the tips in this guide to plan a successful health promotion event.

### Planning:

Planning is critical to the success of any outreach effort. Contact the NHO sponsoring organization several months ahead of time to request up-to-date information and materials. (Contact information for each month's sponsoring organization is provided in each toolkit).

- Consider enlisting the help of a community partner to help you plan and promote your event.
- Meet with those who will be valuable in your event coordination. To get started, sit down with potential partners, such as local businesses, local government agencies, key leaders, organizations, and media partners who share an interest in the NHO.
- Recruit volunteers, speakers, and community liaisons.
- Develop new or adapt existing materials to distribute at the event.
- Be sure to get them printed and/or copied in advance.
- Conduct a run-through before the event.

### Promoting:

Develop a publicity and media outreach plan. Designate a media contact from your planning team and make sure he or she is available to answer questions and follow up on media requests.

- Start by creating a local media list.
- Use local-access television, radio, newspaper, and community calendars to promote your event.



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- Post event announcements on your Web site. Encourage your partners to post similar announcements on their Web sites.
- Send a press release.
- Engage the media by offering a spokesperson from your organization or the community.
- Post flyers or posters throughout the community: on bulletin boards at local community centers, places of worship, libraries, post offices, local schools, recreation centers, clinics, pharmacies, stores, and businesses.
- Send flyers to each participating organization for distribution.

### On the Day of the Event:

- Set up tables, chairs, and a check-in table prior to your event.
- Make plenty of sign-in sheets. Create a separate sign-in sheet for members of the media.
- Don't forget the refreshments!
- Make signs to direct participants and reporters to your event.

### Tracking Media Coverage:

If you are distributing information to the media, plan ahead of time to track your coverage. There are both paid and free resources to track media coverage.


Free media tracking resources search for news articles based on your specific search term(s) and a date range. Some tracking services will send automatic email alerts to notify you when your event and/or keywords are mentioned.

Paid media tracking typically captures a wider range of media stories (both print and online) than free Internet search tools. Paid media tracking sources search within certain locations, news outlet types, and/or specific dates. Some paid media tracking tools offer email alerts and the ability to search archived Web and print news; they also allow users to tailor searches to obtain the most relevant media stories. Other paid media services monitor all forms of social media, including blogs, top video and image-sharing sites, forums, opinion sites, mainstream online media, and Twitter.

Be sure to share media coverage with your community partners, stakeholders, and all those who helped you plan and promote your event. Post a summary of media

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coverage on your organization's Web site. No matter the size or success of your event, remember that your efforts are key to educating the public about important health issues.

Last but not least, share your feedback and results with us here at [healthfinder.gov](http://healthfinder.gov). You can contact us at [info@nhic.org](mailto:info@nhic.org) or send us a tweet @healthfinder (<http://twitter.com/healthfinder>) .



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